

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 24, 2009

JENNER HEADLANDS ACQUISITION

File No. 08-064-01
Project Manager: Deborah Hirst

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Consideration and possible Conservancy authorization to: 1) accept \$5.85 million from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States Department of Commerce (NOAA) for the acquisition of the 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands property and disburse these funds to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOS) for the acquisition of a conservation easement on the Jenner Headlands property; and 2) disburse up to \$8,000,000 of Conservancy funds to the Sonoma Land Trust to acquire the Jenner Headlands property in western Sonoma County.

LOCATION: Jenner, Sonoma County

PROGRAM CATEGORY: S.F. Bay Area Conservation Program

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Maps](#)

Exhibit 2: [Photographs of Jenner Headlands](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Support Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31104 & 31160 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes:

1. Acceptance of a grant in the amount of \$5,850,000 (five million eight hundred fifty thousand dollars) from the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, (NOAA) Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) for the acquisition of the approximately 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands property, (Sonoma County Assessor Parcel Nos. 097-010-003, 105-270-002 to 105-270-005, 105-270-007, 097-010-002, 097-010-006 to 097-010-011, 099-

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010-002 and 099-010-003, 099-010-006, 099-010-009, 099-020-009, 099-020-014 to 099-020-019, 107-190-014, 099-030-026 and 099-030-027, 099-030-034, 099-131-032, 099-020-020, 099-030-023, 099-030-028 to 099-030-030, 099-020-012 and 099-020-013, 099-030-003, 099-030-020 and 099-030-021, and 099-030-031 and 099-030-032), as shown in Exhibit 1 to the accompanying staff recommendation.

2. Disbursement of up to the full amount of the NOAA CELCP grant to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (“SCAPOS D”) to be used by SCAPOS D to acquire a conservation easement over the Jenner Headlands property, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Prior to the disbursement of funds SCAPOS D shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Office of the Conservancy (“the Executive Officer”) all relevant acquisition documents, including, but not limited to the conservation easement, appraisal, environmental assessment, agreement of purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and documents related to title;
 - b. SCAPOS D shall obtain an interest in the property, through a conservation easement, which will permanently dedicate the property to the purpose of protecting, restoring and enhancing wildlife habitat open space, and providing limited public access where appropriate, in a manner acceptable to the Executive Officer and NOAA.
3. Disbursement of up \$8,000,000 (eight million dollars) to the Sonoma Land Trust (“SLT”) to be used for the acquisition of the Jenner Headlands property, subject to the following conditions:
 - a. Disbursement of funds is conditioned upon the availability of bond funds sufficient to award the funds to the grantee and expiration of the 30-day review by the Department of Finance and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee.
 - b. Prior to the disbursement of funds for acquisition of the real property, SLT shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Office of the Conservancy (“the Executive Officer”):
 - i. All relevant acquisition documents, including, but not limited to, appraisal, environmental assessment, agreement of purchase and sale, escrow instructions, and documents related to title.
 - ii. Evidence that SLT has obtained all funds necessary to complete the acquisition.
 - c. SLT shall pay no more than fair market value for the property as established in an appraisal approved by the Executive Officer.
 - d. SLT shall permanently dedicate the property for the purposes of protecting,

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restoring and enhancing habitat and open space, and providing limited public access where appropriate, pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 31116(b).

- e. SLT shall acknowledge Conservancy funding by erecting and maintaining a sign on the property that has been reviewed and approved by the Executive Officer.”

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines last updated by the Conservancy on June 4, 2009.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the protection of natural habitats and resources of regional importance within the San Francisco Bay Area.
3. Sonoma Land Trust is a private nonprofit organization, existing under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code, and whose purposes are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The proposed authorization would enable Sonoma Land Trust (“SLT”) to acquire the Jenner Headlands property, which consists of 5,630 acres of rolling coastal terrace and wooded slopes north of the Russian River in western Sonoma County (Exhibit 1) to ensure the preservation of its outstanding scenic, habitat and public access resources. As part of the transaction, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (“SCAPOSD”) would acquire a conservation easement over the property, partially funded by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (“NOAA CELCP”) which requires a public entity to hold an interest in the property.

The Jenner Headlands’ scenic ridge tops, forest and rolling coastal terrace grasslands are highly visible to drivers for 10 miles of Coastal Highway 1 along the western side of the property (Exhibit 2). Open space views of the property are a backdrop for kayakers and paddlers on the Russian River to the south and hikers, bicyclists and equestrians recreating at Sonoma Coast State Beach to the west of the property. In addition, a future link in the California Coastal Trail along 2.5 miles of coastal terrace with wide-ranging open ocean views will be made possible through the acquisition. The property’s proximity to Sonoma Coast State Beach, the Poff Ranch (acquired by Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in December 2007 with Conservancy support) and other Russian River area destinations may enable a fantastic network of coastal and inland trails. The riparian areas, dense redwood and Douglas fir forest, oak woodlands, chaparral, meadows and coastal prairie land of the property are home to a

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diversity of plants, wildlife and fish - including federally-listed steelhead trout and coho salmon. In addition, the site may also provide for potential adaptation to global climate-change for wildlife and vegetation over time due to its size, variety of habitat and its adjacency to nearly 25,000 acres of protected lands in public ownership and under conservation easements in western Sonoma County.

The risk of development of the Jenner Headlands is high due to the existence of 42 perfected certificates of compliance on the property, the desirability of Sonoma's coast for homes and its proximity to the Bay Area. Without the proposed conservation acquisition, the property could be developed for residential use, and commercial timber harvest would continue. However, working with the property owners and a number of funding partners, Sonoma Land Trust has negotiated an opportunity to forever protect the Jenner Headlands' tremendous ecological resources and ensure access for the public to this remarkable Sonoma coast property before the end of 2009.

The Conservancy has been working with the SLT, SCAPOSD, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), NOAA and others to protect the Jenner Headlands for several years, and has received two awards totaling \$5.85 million from NOAA's CELCP for the acquisition. Staff was poised to present the project to the Conservancy board for funding consideration when the bond freeze occurred in December, 2008. The window for completing the acquisition has grown increasingly narrow as the deadlines for both the purchase agreement, which has already been extended by the landowners, and the NOAA CELCP grant necessitate a close by December 31, 2009.

In August, 2009 the Conservancy and WCB requested an exemption from the Department of Finance from the restriction on authorization of new bond-funded projects (Budget Letters 08-33 and 09-15) to allow both agencies to review and possibly approve the Jenner project. The Department of Finance has granted an exemption for the project to proceed. While it is unlikely that state bond funds will be available by December 31, 2009, with the Conservancy and WCB's approval of the project before that date, SLT would be able to complete the transaction with bridge funding from private organizations, and the Conservancy and WCB funds will repay those organizations without interest accruing when currently appropriated funds are made available to both agencies.

Upon close of the acquisition, SLT will begin preparation of a management plan working with public agency partners and input from the public to guide the enhancement of the property's diverse natural resources and allow for compatible public access. Surveys to identify impacts from prior land use, including cattle ranching, timber harvest and logging roads, will be done in preparation for the management plan. The project partners anticipate managing the forest to speed transition to more age-diverse and fire resistant stands of redwood and healthy, functioning forest. As the forest is managed for restoration of these late seral stage forest characteristics and more trees are enabled to grow larger, it is expected that additional carbon will be sequestered on the property and it is possible the property will be registered as a carbon sequestration project. SLT will explore the potential to register and sell carbon credits consistent with the conservation easement which requires that profits from this activity be used to steward the property.

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Resource management activities will be designed to enhance the ecological values of the property and any revenue generated through management of the property will be directed back into the on-going management and operations of the Jenner Headlands. In addition to the survey of natural resource needs, cultural and historic resources on the property will be assessed for protection and future interpretation. The management plan will be completed within two years following the acquisition. From the time of close, SLT will manage the protection of the property, and SCAPOSD will support the property's protection by monitoring the Conservation Easement.

SLT is extremely well-suited to lead the proposed acquisition and conservation of the Jenner Headlands. For more than 30 years the organization has been committed to protecting the varied scenic, natural, agricultural and open landscapes of Sonoma County for the benefit of present and future generations. SLT holds over 30 conservation easements and currently owns and manages over 19,000 acres, including the Little Black Mountain Preserve located in proximity to the Jenner Headlands. SLT has conducted numerous successful projects with support from the Conservancy including acquisition of Roche Ranch and the Estero Americano Preserve. Similarly, SCAPOSD has been an outstanding partner in conservation in Sonoma County for nearly two decades. In 1990, Sonoma County voters approved the creation of the SCAPOSD and a ¼ cent sales tax for the purpose of permanently protecting Sonoma County's diverse agricultural, natural resources and scenic open space lands for all generations, and in 2006, voted to continue the tax for another 20 years. The agency has protected over 70,000 acres of priority land through acquisition and conservation easements throughout Sonoma County. Significant coastal properties in the area protected by the District, with support from the Conservancy, include Wright Hill Ranch (Poff), Willow Creek and Red Hill.

Site Description:

The Jenner Headlands consists of 5,630 acres of coastal land located just east of Highway 1 north of the Russian River where it meets the Pacific Ocean. This visually spectacular property is adjacent to significant corridors of protected open space including the 10,000-acre Sonoma Coast State Beach with 17 miles of coastline, SLT's 560-acre Little Black Mountain Preserve, and over 10,000 acres of other protected lands in western Sonoma County. It is bounded to the west by views of the ocean and to the south by the popular tourist route from Jenner inland along Russian River Road. The property is 11 miles north of Bodega Bay and approximately 37 miles south of Gualala at the Mendocino County border.

Mixed redwood and Douglas fir forest and oak woodland make up the approximately 3,200 wooded acres on the property. In addition 1,600 acres of coastal prairie and other grasslands are a tremendous resource for biological diversity. The property includes portions of eight watersheds; much of the area has been designated as Significant Natural Area by California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). The property's elevation ranges from 120 to 1,800 feet above sea-level and includes 13 types of habitat. This variety of forests, grasslands, wetlands and riparian areas is home to such fish and wildlife species as Coho salmon, steelhead, river otter, red tree vole, fox, bobcats and

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mountain lions, red-legged frogs and birds such as marbled murrelet, peregrine falcon and osprey. Six known nesting sites for spotted owl exist on the Jenner Headlands with two more sites on an adjacent parcel to the north. Sheephouse Creek is of note as it is one of three locations DFG is operating a collaborative reintroduction program for Coho.

Known historically as the Rule Ranch, the property has supported cattle grazing and timber harvesting since the mid to late 1800's. Development on site includes two small ranch houses, a 2,800 square foot barn from the 1800s, a hunting cabin, small sheds, cattle fencing and watering tanks. A new entry to the property from Highway 1 was recently completed and holds potential for future public access once it is connected with existing ranch roads. The property can be reached by unpaved roads including one leading up from the small coastal community of Jenner and others across easements through adjacent properties to the north and east. These connections allow limited access south to the town of Duncans Mills and to a local timber processing facility. Timber was most recently harvested on portions of the property in 2003 and prior to the 1990s in areas of Jenner Gulch. The majority of the property has not had timber removed since the 1970s and larger second growth redwoods and Douglas fir can be found. The property has a number of significant land features including rock outcroppings, overlooks and at least one known redwood 'fairy ring' showing how great the size of redwoods have historically been on the property.

Project History:

In 2006, the current property owners approached former Sonoma County Supervisor Michael Reilly with interest in exploring the possibility of developing a conservation transaction for the property. The threat of development and further parcelization of this highly visible coastal property lent urgency to the interest in protecting the resources of the Jenner Headlands.

Over the past three years SLT has led negotiations with the property owners on behalf of the Conservancy, WCB, SCAPOSD and federal and private funding partners. In September 2008 SLT and the property owners signed a purchase agreement for \$36,000,000 for the property that required the transaction to close escrow by September 30, 2009. Based on the progress toward a successful close this year, and in consideration of the complications which have occurred with the State budget, SLT was able to secure an extension for the purchase agreement to December 31, 2009.

The NOAA made the first award for the project in 2007 with a grant of \$2,850,000 from the highly competitive Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) to the Conservancy. In July 2008, NOAA granted the Conservancy an augmentation of \$3,000,000 to the project for a total of \$5,850,000 in federal funding from the CELCP. This funding will be allocated toward the conservation easement SCAPOSD will hold on the property from the time of close. A request for the maximum extension possible for the funds was approved by NOAA and funds must be used by December 31, 2009.

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In Spring 2009 SLT received confirmation that the United States Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program would contribute \$1,000,000 toward the Jenner Headlands acquisition. The combined federal contribution to the permanent protection of the Jenner Headlands will be \$6,850,000, so long as the transaction can be completed by the end of this calendar year.

SLT has also secured a grant of \$4,000,000 from the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation for the acquisition and an additional \$2,000,000 from the Foundation to help meet the \$4,000,000 stewardship fund goal for the property. Staff anticipates the WCB and SCAPOSD will consider awards for the Jenner Headlands project in November 2009. Based on on-going coordination for the project, staff anticipates the WCB will consider a grant of \$8 million and SCAPOSD will consider a grant of over \$9 million toward the acquisition at their respective November meetings.

With the Conservancy's support, and contingent on the approvals of the other funding partners, SLT will complete the \$36 million acquisition for the Jenner Headlands by December 31, 2009.

PROJECT FINANCING:

USFS Forest Legacy Program	\$ 1,000,000
The Betty & Gordon Moore Foundation	\$ 4,000,000
NOAA CELCP (to the Conservancy)	\$ 5,850,000
Coastal Conservancy	\$ 8,000,000
Wildlife Conservation Board	\$ 8,000,000
SCAPOSD (approximate amount)	<u>\$ 9,150,000</u>
Total Project Cost	\$36,000,000

The anticipated source of funds is the fiscal year 08/09 appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). These funds may be used for the acquisition of fee interest in property in accordance with the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. The proposed project is acquisition of fee title of property for the purpose of natural resource and open space protection and limited public access. As discussed below, the project is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of the Division 21. Proposition 84 requires that for acquisition projects that protect natural resources, priority be given to projects that meet specified criteria. (Public Res. Code § 75071) The proposed acquisition satisfies four of the five specified criteria:

1. **Landscape/habitat linkages:** The Property links with several other protected properties all of which contain important wildlife habitat.(See Exhibit 1).
2. **Watershed protection:** The Jenner Headlands acquisition will help to protect portions of eight watersheds, including one, Sheephouse Creek, which is used by the Department of Fish and Game for its Coho salmon reintroduction program.

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3. **Properties that support relatively large areas of under-protected major habitat types:** The Property exhibits outstanding natural resources, including coastal prairie, redwood forest and chapparal.
4. **Properties for which there is a non-state matching contribution toward the acquisition costs:** The SLT has raised \$20 million dollars in federal, local and private funds to match the State contribution.

Finally, as required by Proposition 84, Conservancy staff has submitted to the Resources Agency and has posted on the Conservancy's website an explanation as to how the proposed acquisition meets the criteria of this section.¹

Due to the current bond freeze, it is probable that the Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board funds will not be available prior to close of escrow. SLT has worked diligently to identify private sources that could provide funding to meet the required acquisition schedule. Through their efforts, two private conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League and The Wildlands Conservancy have stepped forward and indicated their willingness, subject to their respective boards' approval, to provide interim funding until the State funds are available.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The Jenner Headlands acquisition project will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 4.5 (Sections 31160 *et seq.*) of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, which authorizes the Conservancy to undertake projects and award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area to public and private agencies and organizations.

Consistent with §31162, the property to be acquired under the proposed project is located in Sonoma County, one of the nine bay-area counties, and will help to achieve several of the primary goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program. Pursuant to Section 31162(b), the Conservancy is authorized to award grants to protect, restore, and enhance natural habitats and connecting corridors, watersheds, scenic areas and other open space resources of regional importance. The proposed project will protect the regionally important natural resources and habitat through acquisition of the Jenner Headlands property for permanent conservation.

Consistent with Section 31163(a), the proposed project is a cooperative effort with the Conservancy, a nonprofit land trust and a willing seller for land acquisition in the San Francisco Bay Area.

¹ Due to the timing of the authorization to move forward with this project, the Proposition 84 notices were sent later than required by PRC § 75071(f), allowing for only 11 days notice rather than 14. Similarly, staff has provided the Department of Finance and the Joint Legislative Budget Committee notice of the proposed project as required by section 9.45 of the 2009 budget act, but uncertainty with respect to the ability of the Board to approve the project delayed posting the letter until September 16, 2009. If staff receive objection to the proposed project as a result of the shortened review period, the project will be brought back to the Board for consideration of the objections received

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In addition, the project satisfies all of the five criteria for determining project priority under §31163(c), as follows: 1) the project is fully consistent with and supported by adopted local plans, including the Sonoma County Local Coastal Plan and General Plan, as discussed in the “Consistency With Local Coastal Program Policies” section, below. 2) the project serves a multi-jurisdictional constituency, since it will preserve open space and scenic areas for the enjoyment of both local residents and visitors who come from across the region and the nation to the area in which the project is located; 3) the project can be implemented in a timely fashion: once funded, the acquisition is expected to occur by December 31, 2009; 4) in the event the project is not implemented promptly, the opportunity for completion of the purchase of the property may be lost; and 5) the Conservancy funding for the acquisition is matched at a ratio of four to one by the other state, local and federal sources.

Consistent with Public Resource Code 31104, the Conservancy is authorized to apply for and accept federal grants and receive other financial support from public sources. This authorization would allow the receipt of those federal funds for disbursement pursuant to Chapter 4.5 of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective G**, the proposed project will secure real property to facilitate the development of a future 2.5 mile link in the California Coastal Trail and inland connecting trails in western Sonoma County.

Consistent with **Goal 4, Objective A**, the proposed project will permanently protect biological diversity through acquisition of 5,630 acres in coastal and inland habitat areas.

Consistent with **Goal 5, Objective C**, the proposed project will preserve wildlife corridors between core habitat areas through acquisition of 5,630 acres of property connecting coastal and inland habitat areas.

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective C**, the proposed project will increase the amount of land accessible to the public by acquisition of 5,630 acres of privately owned property to make it available for compatible public access, including a future 2.5 mile link in the California Coastal Trail.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated June 4, 2009, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy’s statutory programs and purposes:** See the

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“Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation” section above.

2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** There is strong support for the Jenner Headlands Acquisition project among conservation partners and representatives such as Assemblyman Wes Chesbro, former Sonoma County Supervisor Michael Reilly, Coastwalk, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, the Jenner Community Club and others (For project letters, see Exhibit 3).
4. **Location:** The proposed project is located in the nine-county Bay Area, approximately fourteen miles north of the town of Bodega Bay on Highway 1 and just upland of the coastal community of Jenner at the mouth of the Russian River in western Sonoma County.
5. **Need:** Conservancy funding is necessary to move quickly and complete the acquisition of this high priority coastal property. The project will support the Conservancy’s mandate to conserve significant coastal resources and regionally significant property.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The significant visual, biological, recreational and cultural-historical features of the property and its potential for connectivity of regional trails and parklands will enhance the greater-than-local interest generated by Sonoma Coast Beach State Park, one of California most visited state parks.
7. **Sea-level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project will acquire 5,630 acres of coastal terrace and forested land adjacent to Highway 1 and bordered to the south by the community of Jenner. The property elevation varies from a hundred feet above sea-level to approximately 1,800 feet and thus is not vulnerable to projected sea level rise over the next 100 years.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** The Jenner Headlands property has more than 40 perfected certificates of compliance and there is an immediate need to act on the opportunity to close on the property for conservation purposes. The purchase agreement and NOAA grant award require close of escrow by December 31, 2009. Without Conservancy funding, the proposed acquisition cannot go forward.
9. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The proposed acquisition will protect the habitat of the Jenner Headlands property and provide a future link of 2.5 miles for the California Coastal Trail.
10. **Leverage:** Conservancy funds will provide approximately 20% of the total project

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cost for the Jenner Headlands acquisition, leveraging \$28,000,000 in other state, federal and private funding.

11. **Readiness:** The SLT signed a purchase agreement in September 2008 has is in a position to close by December 2009 with Conservancy approval of the proposed project.
12. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.
13. **Cooperation:** The SLT is a local conservation leader with a record of collaboration with the Conservancy, SCAPOSD, private property owners and nonprofit organizations. Two additional conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League and The Wildlands Conservancy have indicated their willingness to assist with interim funding should the state funding not be available by the December 31, 2009 close of escrow deadline.
14. **Minimization of Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** The proposed project will ensure protection of approximately 1,600 acres of grassland and 3,200 acres of mixed Douglas fir and redwood forest and areas of oak woodland, among other habitat types. Future restoration and forestry management activity will support growth of the late seral stage characteristics of the forest and potentially increase the forest’s carbon storage capacity. The protection of the forests and grassland may offer a benefit for the stabilization of the atmosphere, as compared with residential development and maximum allowable timber harvest. Development and activity on the property will be limited by the conservation easement, and management activities and monitoring will be guided by the approved management plan. Measures to avoid or minimize greenhouse gas emissions will be incorporated to the extent feasible and consistent with the long-term objectives of the acquisition, to restore and enhance the ecological values of the property and provide compatible public access and portions of the property may be used for carbon sequestration credit to be used to steward the property.
15. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea-level rise:** The proposed project will permanently protect forest, grassland and other habitat resources on the 5,630-acre property. The size and diversity of elevations of the property offer connectivity for movement and adaptation of wildlife and, over time, plant species. Vegetation management and habitat restoration objectives in the management plan will include activities to reduce risk of fire, spread of invasive species, run-off or sedimentation into riparian areas and other potential impacts that may occur as a result of greater storm activity or other climate changes. The management plan may be updated and management techniques may be adapted as additional information on vulnerability to climate change becomes available.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

A significant portion of the Jenner Headlands property is located within the Coastal Zone.

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The proposed acquisition of the property for conservation and public access is consistent with relevant portions of the Sonoma's Local Coastal Program on the Environment, Resources and Recreation (Sections III, VI and V). The proposed project is consistent with the Resource Conservation Element of the Sonoma County General Plan which calls for the protection of the county's water, forest and biotic resources (Sections 3.0, 4.0 and 5.1). The property has areas within in the General Plan's Coastal Scenic Landscape Unit and its acquisition will protect the scenic value of this tremendous resource. The acquisition will also provide protection for coastal prairie habitat consistent with the General Plan (Section 5.2).

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The Jenner Headlands Acquisition project involves the fee title acquisition of real property in order to preserve it as scenic open space and for public access purposes. The acquisition of the property as provided in this staff recommendation is thus categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15325, which exempts transfers of ownership of interests in land in order to preserve open space or enhance natural conditions, including plant or animal habitats. Staff will file a notice of exemption upon Board approval.